DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 972 SP 037 938

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TITLE Teachers' Voices Interpreting Change.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 41p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA, April 13-17, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Collegiality; Computer Uses in Education; *Educational Change; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Study; Individual Development; Self Efficacy; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Empowerment; Teacher Improvement; Teacher Researchers; Teachers; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS Reflective Thinking; Voice (Rhetoric)

ABSTRACT

This paper uses teachers' voices to explore transformation processes in teachers as a result of participation in an innovative school-based Master's degree program at the Institute for Educational Transformation. The program is built around a set of beliefs and principles that enunciate a philosophy of teaching and learning emphasizing work within teams, developing reflective practice, school-based inquiry, and continuous improvement. Data for this paper come from reflective essays written by 103, 1997 graduates of the program seeking to understand their own processes of transformation over its duration. They were asked to think about and document in a portfolio how they had changed over the course of approximately 2 years. Their writings described important changes they could see in their professional and personal lives. The 1997 graduates described the ability to see children and classrooms through new perspectives, such that they felt the program helped them develop stronger professional voices, more confidence in their professional judgments, and more self-efficacy and power. Teachers also reported: a greater knowledge and sense of self; increased technology proficiency; improved understanding of the writing process and improved writing style; improved teaching practices; changed educational philosophy; improved professional and personal relationships; and broader mentoring and modeling for others. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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TEACHERS' VOICES INTERPRETING CHANGE

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April, 1998

Paper prepared for Presentation at the Annual Meeting, American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA, April 13-17, 1998. The authors wish to thank Pamela LePage-Lees, Hugh T. Sockett, and Diane Wood for comments and suggestions on an earlier version. They bear no responsibility for any errors or confusion that remains. Please do not quote without permission. Address correspondence to Leo C. Rigsby, Institute for Educational Transformation, 10900 University Boulevard, MSN 4E4, Manassas, VA 20110

SP037939 — SP037938

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Teachers' Voices Interpreting Change

As I look back over the last two years, it is hard to know where to begin to tell someone about what has affected me the most during these two years with IET. In the beginning, I believed that the sole reason I was joining this Master's program was to better myself as an educator. Little did I know that I was embarking on a journey that would change my entire life. The changes I have experienced are very reminiscent of the metamorphosis a butterfly goes through during its life to become the beautiful butterfly that is not afraid to fly. I believe that I have become not only a better teacher but a better daughter, wife, mother, and friend.

These are the words of a first grade teacher who has been transformed by engaging in research in her classroom and by reflecting on the patterns she found in her journals describing the learning of her students. She has reformulated her classroom practice around the virtues of caring, trust, courage, honesty, and practical wisdom. She and her teammate, a kindergarten teacher, studied the developing literacy of kindergarten and first grade children. The teachers assessed children's readiness to learn by recording for each child his or her performance on the usual criteria applied to children of these ages--recognition of letters of the alphabet by name and sound, recognition of shapes, recognition of colors, etc. Some children were on a trajectory for failure or being labeled with a learning disability. These creative teachers focused on alternative indicators of the developing literacy of these least developed children and tailored pedagogy to move them by the end of the school year through intermediate stages of scribble writing, learning letters, using beginning letters and sounds, using first and last sounds, and using inventive spelling to read and write near grade level. Teaching to the needs of these low performing children and building on the strengths they brought to the classrooms to enable them to make clear progress in developing literacy exemplifies the highest qualities of teacher professionalism.

These two teachers are graduates of an innovative school-based master's program created at the Institute for Educational Transformation by Hugh Sockett and a group of veteran classroom teachers. Organized to enable teachers to reconceptualize their practice as moral

professionalism (Sockett 1993), the curriculum emphasizes teacher research and reflective practice (Schon 1983). The program is built around a set of beliefs and principles that enunciate a philosophy of teaching and learning that emphasizes work within teams, developing reflective practice, school-based inquiry, and continuous improvement. (Review this document on our Web Page at http://www/gmu.edu/departments/iet/).

In this paper we use teachers' voices to explore transformation processes in teachers as a result of participation in this program. Few of the efforts to foster change in schools and classrooms begin their analyses with the voices and experiences of teachers. The current research builds on the premise that teachers have unique and valuable perspectives on what goes on in schools and the kinds of changes that facilitate their important work. Therefore, we turn to the voices and experiences of teachers to begin to theorize educational transformation. We explore the meanings teachers give to personal and professional changes. Consistent with the principles that we impart to classroom teachers about continually transforming their classrooms, we seek to transform our own teaching through research and reflective practice. In that spirit, the research in this paper is teacher research on teachers who are themselves engaged in teacher research.

A starting point for this inquiry is the literature that bemoans the disconnect between educational research and educational practice. Key assumptions in that literature (see Kennedy 1997; Wagner 1997, for example) are that educational research **should** inform educational practice and that if educational practioners would adopt and closely follow the most valid and reliable educational research--"best practices"-- we could overcome the dreadful conditions in American schools that result (the literature argues) for example, in our high school aged children performing at the bottom of test distributions in international comparisons. Once again, in the last few months, newspaper headlines (Washington Post, February 25) have placed blame on American teachers for these results.

In the extreme, traditional educational researchers have developed systems of instruction that prescribe in detail how teachers are to manage their classrooms. These systems dictate what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, in what order curriculum items are to be addressed, and what methods are to be used to assess children's learning. Frank Smith (1981), a critic of such programs, disapprovingly quotes these words from the promotional materials of one such

instructional program:

> The teacher knows exactly what she has to teach. And how to teach it. All the steps for presenting a task, evaluating student responses, praising and correcting the children are carefully outlined. (Smith 1981, p. 112)

Elsewhere in the same article Smith laments that instructional programs developed by educational researchers have in common that they: "transfer instructional decision-making from the teacher (and children) in the classroom to procedures laid down by people removed from the teaching situation by time and distance." Embedded in much traditional educational research is a conception of teaching and learning that envisions teachers as technicians who implement decontextualized instruction to undifferentiated children.

We intend to disrupt these assumptions. In fact the School-Based Master's Program from which we have drawn the data for this paper is explicitly organized around principles that challenge assumptions of this sort. In contrast to the view of the role of teachers given above, we understand teaching and learning to be more characteristic of Belenky et al.'s description of mothering:

> Good mothering requires adaptive responding to constantly changing phenomena: it is tuned to the concrete and particular. A response that works with a particular child at a particular moment may not work with a different child or with the same child at a different moment. Mothers expect change, Ruddick says, and "change requires a kind of learning in which what one learns cannot be applied exactly, and often not even by analogy, to a new situation." (1980, p. 111). In this sense "maternal thinking" differs from scientific thinking, which considers an experimental result to be real--a fact--only if it can be replicated. p. 201

The characteristics of "maternal thinking" are at the heart of what we see as effective teaching: attention to the individual needs and resources of each learner, attention to the reflexive

nature of learning (i.e., recognition that teaching/learning episodes create a new context for next steps in learning), devotion to interacting with the learner to enhance her adaptation to the world around her, and devotion to the well-being of the learner in the long run. Such a picture of teaching contrasts starkly with assumptions embedded in much educational research.

This is not to say that we view teaching as an activity that does not build on educational research in important ways. Rather, we assume well-prepared teachers can cast a critical eye on educational research and theory to deepen their own understandings of teaching and learning. Reflective practioners engaged in public dialogue can critically examine different pedagogies and assumptions about teaching and learning. They can readily see the practical limits to generalizing from studies of effectiveness of different instructional programs given the nature of comparison groups researchers have access to. Researchers don't and can't compare their "Program" to all logical alternatives. Thus, teachers understand there can be no valid list of "best practices." Add to this the notion that because the career advancement of educational researchers often is tied to professional and commercial judgments of a program's "success," program developers are likely to advocate for their program's use regardless of its comparative efficacy.

We must leave to teachers how to combine and modify different pedagogies to construct an optimal practice that accommodates the particular children and particular contexts within which they are working. Given that contexts change and the children for whom teachers are responsible change from day to day and even more from year to year, it is unreasonable to think that a single program of instruction developed by an educational researcher in some different context and around the learning of different children, could ever hope to serve the needs of all children. It is difficult to imagine any situation where the appropriate pedagogy would be:

> seen as a manufacturing process, with the learner as raw material, the teacher as tool, instruction as "treatment," and a literate child as the product delivered at the end. (Smith 1981 p. 111)

Just to be more explicit about our analysis of the role of educational research promoting given programs, imagine with me an American classroom in which a first grade teacher is trying

to develop reading among the 28 children she finds in her classroom at the beginning of the year. A majority of these children, on average, will have had some kind of pre-school experience in which there was systematic preparation anticipating the beginning of schooling. They will be more advanced in social skills and readiness for the beginnings of literacy than those in the class whose home-centered experience has included no preparation for the beginning of formal literacy. It is inconceivable that a single program-based strategy will accommodate the needs and resources of each of these children individually. We assume that effective teachers will develop and use a mix of strategies, each of which may be adapted to their own teaching styles.

Neither does the "maternal thinking" perspective on teaching mean that we see teaching as a calling whose practice is beyond the reaches of systematic "training" for either pre-service practioners or more experienced teachers. We argue, rather, that the qualities needed for such practice are the qualities of the autonomous, reflective practitioner described by Sockett (p. 42-50). It is these very qualities that our School-Based Master's Program seeks to foster in teachers.

Data for the analyses in this paper come from reflective essays written by 1997 graduates of the program seeking to understand their own processes of transformation over its duration. They were asked to think about and to document in a portfolio how they had changed over the two plus years. We are interested in how teachers construct their experiences of this program and to what elements of the pedagogy and reflective practice they attribute change. We organize the pedagogy, constructivist in orientation, around four questions:

How do we understand ourselves as people and as teachers?

How do we create knowledge of our world through the forms and genres of language?

How do we seek knowledge and understanding of our world, of students, classrooms, and schools?

How do we build learning communities and reflective practice?

Our master's program recruits teachers in teams of two to six teachers from schools to join and go through the program together. The typical entering master's class has about ninety students, all of whom must be certified teachers currently working in schools. To be work- and family-friendly, classes are spread over three summers and the intervening academic years.

Classroom instruction is concentrated in two 2-week summer sessions and a final one week summer session in which teachers present their team research. In addition, there are four class days per semester in the four intervening school year semesters. All class days are eight hour sessions.

In the first year teachers conduct an individual classroom-based, qualitative, research project, typically based on assessing the strengths and needs of the children in their classroom, formulating curricular innovations to address unmet needs and assessing their relative success in meeting these needs. Teams meet once a week, usually in the school, to share classroom experiences, discuss readings, exchange drafts of upcoming papers, and engage in critical dialogue over interpretations of these materials. Faculty advisers participate in these meetings two to three times each semester. First year classes concentrate on the moral base of teacher professionalism, language and culture, qualitative research methodology and technology. Courses are complemented by Web-based discussions in which teachers share their own experiences and comment on the experiences of others. Some of these discussions focus on readings and issues raised in the readings; others share classroom practice or research issues. In effect, discussions in team meetings and the Web-based conferences extend the program "classroom" to other times and spaces where teachers work.

In the second year, teachers on teams collaborate on a team research project resulting in written and oral presentations that are equivalent to a group master's thesis. Their classroom work includes further work on language and culture, epistemology, and qualitative research methods. Faculty advisors work with teams more intensively as research projects develop and data collection and analysis proceeds.

Finally, in the third summer session, teams present their research in a professional conference to the rest of the class, guests from their schools, and to the entering class. The presentations reflect the creativity and imagination of an energized group of teachers, most of whom claim to have experienced transformative change. The final writing project from program participants, also due in the third summer session, is an interpretative narrative exploring whether and how they have changed during the program. The individual narratives are accompanied by a portfolio documenting teachers' experiences over the previous two years. It is the interpretative

narratives that constitute the data in this paper.

Unlike most other master's programs, our program aims to keep teachers in the classroom. It seeks to renew and invigorate teachers. The team work addresses teacher isolation and the absence of critical dialogue centered on classroom practice. Team work in the program promotes team work in schools beyond the program. With this program we seek to open new avenues for learning and social support that will serve teachers long after they have completed the requirements. In effect, we seek to foster the development of reflective practice, classroom based research, the capacity to engage in critical dialogue with colleagues and with the professional literature that we take to form the basis of "maternal thinking" in teachers.

We analyze essays written by 103 graduating teacher/participants (of 114 original enrollees) for patterns, variety of experience, and outlier responses about transformation or resistance to transformation. In beginning our analysis, we read through all the papers and formulated a list of transformations and connected program elements. We refined the list and grouped items into eight broader categories. We then re-read the papers and coded occurrences of these categories. The list is included as Table 1 at the end of the paper. These categories represent ways in which teachers claim to have been transformed. We will briefly describe and explicate the meanings of these aspects of transformation as we give examples. The categories are by no means mutually exclusive. They are only exhaustive in the sense that they encapsulate the great majority of the aspects of change that teachers mention in these essays.

These analyses are preliminary and "in process". Our argument is a simple one: Teachers can be given opportunities for personal and professional growth that transform their classroom practice. Our school-based master's program is one example of these opportunities that works well for many teachers, who attribute personal and professional transformation to both particular experiences in the program and to the experience of the program as a whole. We believe that the empowerment of teachers' voices and the energizing of teachers' to reflect on, and conduct action research in, their classrooms have important effects on changes in classroom practice. We want to document these processes by describing patterns we see and by giving examples of these processes from narratives written by teachers' as they graduate from the program. Subsequent research will look at whether these changes have been sustained in practice in the years after

graduation.

The kinds of change teachers talk about can be seen in this quotation from one essay:

> The ways in which I've changed during . . . [the program] . . . are so intertwined that it is difficult to discuss them as separate entities. I guess an umbrella statement would be that I am willing to take risks that will benefit the students in my classes. Specifically, because my teaching strategies have changed, I hear my students' voices much more than my own. Because my relationship with my students has changed, I am not afraid of them anymore. Finally, because my confidence has increased, I can evaluate and improve my teaching practices rather than to feel overwhelmed by them. In short, . . .[the program]. . .provided the motivation, opportunity, and support I needed to transform myself into a happier, more effective teacher.

Not all the teachers who enrolled in the program described transformations in such poetic terms but all described important changes they could see in their professional and personal lives. Some also gave evidence of resistance to change.

I. The Ability to See Children and Classrooms Through New Lenses or Perspectives

Many teachers described changes in their capacity to take on different perspectives in researching their classrooms or in interacting with colleagues. The program incorporates readings depicting a wide range of experiences and perspectives. Many teachers come to the program with the comfortable perspectives of white, middle class professionals. They expect orderly, deference-giving, students who are motivated to use education to get "ahead" in the world. Casual interactions with colleagues tend to reinforce simplistic ideas about the motivations and lifestyles of children and families who are from different cultures. Increasingly, teachers encounter students and families whose culture is different from their own. Using readings that emphasize contexts of cultural diversity, reflective writing, and critical dialogue among teammates and class mates, the program seeks to open teachers to multiple perspectives.

Teachers report that they have gained new perspectives (e.g., learned to consider and appreciate other viewpoints and their contexts) that have led to greater understanding of the children they teach, the children's parents, other teachers and administrators. A complementary influence on this capacity was the writing, interpreting, and re-interpreting of personal narratives. A high school Spanish teacher wrote:

> . . . I quickly learned that this program was going to stretch my imagination and test my beliefs. This was first evident when . . .[the instructors] . . . told us to write a narrative, and I didn't even know what a narrative was! Then my confusion was multiplied when we were asked to "reflect" on these narratives using different "lenses." Well, needless to say, I quickly learned that reflecting meant to contemplate other aspects of an issue/occurrence, and a lens was a tool we could use to do such contemplating. Although I initially found this experience to be unsettling and uncomfortable, I eventually learned how to see things from a non-traditional perspective. I even noticed that I began to enjoy using my new tool of applying lenses to life, especially when looking at educational issues.

This teacher studied the effects of reaching out to the parents of high school students to solicit parental cooperation and support in her work with their children. Later in her paper she connected her transformation to this work:

> . . . by talking to parents I learned more about their viewpoints and more about their children's lives. It made me feel more connected to my students, which in turn helped me to know how to approach them better and understand them better.

A high school physical education teacher wrote:

> . . .I wrote mine . . . [narratives] . . . without much forethought, merely completing an assignment made by a professor. When we were told later that those narratives would

help form the basis for our research project, I was incredulous. I saw nothing there that could possibly be anything but meaningless gibberish about education. It amazes me to this day that by constantly revisiting those narratives and looking at their content it has had the effect on me that it has! It helped me understand the kind of person I was and how the factors that influenced me, caused me to turn out the way I was. At first, in looking at my narratives I saw nothing but "stories from the past." As the concept of "lenses" was introduced I could begin to see new meaning for me behind what was written. . . .

The physical education instructor later addresses his classroom practice:

. . . Of my original four narratives, the one I called "Old Horse Face" depicts a college professor who seemed to have a split personality. Very paternalistic in the classroom but capable of being maternalistic outside the classroom. His professional manner was quite different from his personal manner. This program has helped me develop a maternalistic professional and personal pedagogy.

About another narrative he recounted the following experience:

My daughter, . . ., was complaining about teachers who were exhibiting paternalistic characteristics. Of course, she didn't use those words, she focused on words like overbearing, demanding, gruff, etc. I recognized in myself some of the characteristics she was not impressed with. I wondered if another girl somewhere was sitting at the dinner table complaining about me! It was an eye opening experience for me and was the beginning of the metamorphosis in my approach to teaching.

A substantial literature from educational theory (Greene 1995; Grumet 1988; Wood 1992; Atwell-Vasey 1998) and from composition research (Brodky 1994; Pratt 1991) provides both a logic for the power of narrative writing and documentation of the transformative effects of

personal writing on writers. Detailed reflective writing about one's classroom is both a beginning point and a documenting tool for classroom research. Thus, writing as a tool for self-discovery complements writing as a tool for studying one's classroom. A number of teachers mentioned the importance of reflective writing for self-discovery and tied this to the use of such writing in their classrooms. An elementary teacher wrote:

> . . . . writing narratives about life experiences gave further insight into how I thought about the world around me. I learned that my experiences are essential to making me who I am. I wrote a narrative about my childhood memory with the doctor's visit. I wrote about my adventures living with the Navajo people. I wrote about the good and awful times in my classroom experiences. Narratives took on deeper meaning and value as they helped me to make sense of my world of teaching and personal family life. I began to wonder if I could use narratives in teaching my students.

Other teachers discussed how taking other perspectives helped them understand and appreciate the differences in perspectives of parents and teachers and of administrators and teachers. Still others wrote of having an increased capacity to imagine the perspectives of their students or of teachers of different cultural groups from their own. A number specifically mentioned the value they had found in understanding and employing the feminist arguments they encountered in the readings, lectures, and discussions.

We judge that not all teachers were broadened as we had hoped by the narrative writing and the reading. Though such views are rare in these essays, the view of this high school history teacher serves to document the point and to cast a brighter light on those who were broadened:

> The last reading that stood out for me, but I must add in a negative way, was the article by Shirley Brice Heath *The Children of Trackton's Children.* This story made me sick. I do know that in so many areas our society is falling apart and it is the children who suffer the most from it. This story bothered me to the core. How can people be so irresponsible to their own children? Zinnia Mae just let her children play all day in the

> corner without playing with them, talking to them, giving them toys, or stimulating them in any way. It is this reality that breaks my heart that people like this are destroying the lives of children everywhere. I spend every waking minute with my children. I get up at four in the morning to do school work so that I will not take away any time from them. I know that I may be in excess, but I look [at] my kids and feel how lucky they are to have people so interested in their development as individuals and then realize that those poor children of Zinnia Mae's have so little. Maybe I would like to be sheltered from the brutal realities of life and this story made everything all to[o] real for me.

This teacher was a young mother who had a second child in the midst of the program. She is clearly and admirably very devoted to her children Of importance is that she was sufficiently empowered by her involvement in the program that she could risk stating a perspective on the reading that differed from the more empathetic perspective taken by faculty and other teachers.

II. Empowered Professional Voice and Judgment

A major objective of the Master's program is to enrich and amplify the professional voice of teachers. Teachers often report that administrators and/or parents challenge their beliefs or practices. Certainly we would argue that teachers ought to be accountable to their administrators and to the parents of their students. On the other hand to be professionals, teachers must have the autonomy to make professional judgments on the basis of sound reflection and their beliefs about teaching and learning. They need both the self-confidence to defend their practices and the practical wisdom to know when to do so. The program fosters reflective thinking and critical dialogue. It also encourages critical analysis of research literature in order to develop teacher's voices.

Teachers report that they have developed stronger professional voices, are more confident of their professional judgments, and have a greater sense of efficacy and power. They are more willing to express their views openly. Teachers also report improved writing proficiency,

allowing them to express their professional views better in writing. In addition, they describe increased involvement in school and professional committees and groups. They also describe involvement in policy and decision-making processes in their schools.

A home visitor/parent educator, reflecting on changes she experienced, wrote:

> I feel I have gained a "professional voice" through my involvement in the [program]. I feel much more confident when talking with parents (my students), colleagues and professionals from other agencies. I now feel so strongly about myself as a professional, with credibility that I'm sure I come across differently in meetings with other professionals, as well as during home visits with parents.

Another elementary teacher analyzed the development of her professional voice in the following terms:

> Another experience, which grew out of my cohort class lectures and discussions, was when I attended an eligibility meeting about one of my students. He was living with a grandmother and had suffered many emotional upheavals. He had difficulty writing, threatened the other students, and appeared angry most of the time. He wanted individual help with assignments, a sense of belonging, and affection in a class of 27 students. He went through all of the testing procedures required for child study. The meeting was called and a vote taken which left the situation at a stale mate. An administrator was to be called in from the School Board Office to hear the case and make a final decision. A couple of days prior to this meeting with the administrator, eligibility and the role of teachers were discussed in cohort. Hugh Sockett pounded the desk, "Teachers are the expert[s]!" We need to go to these meetings as the experts because we are in the classroom with the students. We know better than any test what a student needs.
>
> Although I was told that my presence was not necessary, I did attend. I prepared myself with my student's work samples, rehearsed in my thinking my words of expertise, and went to the meeting. I acted as "the expert." I felt as the expert. I spoke as the

expert. I was the expert. I introduced myself to the administrator and shook her hand. I then explained how I taught in my classroom using multi-modal methods to accommodate all my students' learning abilities and what I had done with this particular student. I showed examples of his work and the communication I had with his home. Near the conclusion of the meeting I got up to leave. The administrator leaned forward and shook my hand, complimenting me on my efforts as a teacher.

I have learned that as a professional teacher I am an expert. . . .I don't claim to know everything there is to know, but I realize that an expert is one who investigates their area of interest continuously, recognizing room for growth and development through reflection and critical analysis. My learning, the learning of an expert is an on-going reflective process.

Commenting on her classroom practice before beginning the program, this teacher had concluded that her old ways were not effective in meeting students needs:

I wanted to find another way in which to help students build language. How can I enrich their life experiences? Isn't the classroom an arena for the purpose of touching young people's lives with rich exposure to the many facets of life? The Master's program was enriching my life. I wanted to make the effort to give that richness to my students, too.

These are powerful examples of the manner in which teachers have been transformed--they have come to see themselves as professionals and as experts. They exhibit as reasoned confidence to advocate for children in meetings. The parent educator, a teacher who worked in a pre-school special education center for children with symptoms of autism, did her research on the "grief" shown by parents as they come to terms with the diagnosis of their child as being autistic.

III. Greater knowledge of or sense of self

A number of teachers pointed to their coming to know themselves better as a major element of change. From the early focus on personal narratives and continuing through each aspect of the curriculum, self-knowledge was stressed as a key element of teacher professionalism. Teachers report that they have gained better knowledge of and sense of self and a better understanding of their roles as teachers. This, they report, has led them to face personal imperfections and to reexamine their teaching practice. They also relate increased awareness and acceptance of their roles as moral professionals. This awareness has led them to be more caring and trusting of students and colleagues, increasing their willingness and courage to take risks. One elementary teacher wrote about this in the following way in an Addendum to her paper:

> There was no way I could have imagined that first summer that I would have had the strength, courage, and confidence to stand before everyone and speak. My voice was silent in large groups settings, except in my own classroom of second graders.
> I recognize that I am now able to share my voice for a number of reasons. One being, the confidence in myself that I have gained from my original reason for choosing the I.E.T. Master's in the beginning. . . . the team concept and aspects of teaming . . .[have]. . . played the main role[s] in my transformation. Our team had many conflicts and struggles to work through, yes, and often on our own. We had much to learn about the teaming process the hard way. But as I honestly reflect on that concern, I feel I am much stronger from that learning experience. Nothing worthwhile ever comes easy, does it?

And in her paper this teacher connected her voice to the importance of giving voice to her students:

> Voices continue to echo and speak to me as I have searched to find my own. Not only is my voice important, but [so also are] those of the children. The importance of my students finding and using their own voice[s], as well as us listening to them was essential

in my research.

Another elementary teacher expressed her gain of self-knowledge in these words:

> I especially remember the narratives we had to write about our own educational experiences. As I look back at the hours of writing these reflective pieces, I realize that they were the true beginning of my transformation as a teacher and an individual. These reflections made me face my imperfections. I came to understand that only b[y] knowing myself, could I become the "real me" locked inside.

She ties this to her classroom practice with the following analysis:

> One article which we were required to read became the key to my research. The article, entitled "Writing down Secrets" by Sara Mosle told about the interactive journaling she began with her students. I had tried to have my students do a daily journal but found they viewed it more as a chore than a positive learning experience. Once I incorporated Mosle's ideas of taking the mystery out of the student/teacher relationship, I found a group of eager writers who were more than willing to share their "secrets" with me. Journal time became a favorite part of the day and . . . [as]. . . my students entered the classroom each day . . . [they] . . . looked forward to reading my response to their journal entries. As Mosle states, "My students, however, seemed to view me as far less mysterious. The journals were what bridged the gap. They operated a little like an apartment-house air shaft, providing a common area where we could communicate." My students' journals served a variety of needs because the students were able to: write about themselves, seek advice from me, describe important events in their lives, or talk about school and home problems. These journal dialogues led me to realize the importance of two of the virtues of teacher professionalism--trust and care.

Another teacher, whose research was on teaming processes within the Master's program

team, wrote:

> Wanting to be accepted and respected by your peers is for many people, a life-long pursuit or desire. To what end or means one chooses to gain that respect and acceptance can be very different for each person. It is much easier to recognize other's imperfections and problems than it is to critically reflect on our own. Looking inside one's self isn't always a pretty sight, but isn't it better that one sees what needs fixing and does something about it before others see it?
>
> I would like to reflect on honesty, secrets, forgiveness, and guilt. I have struggled with these issues for a very long time, and through some recent soul searching and critical reflection, I am beginning to understand more about myself and our team within a moral framework.

A fortyish male high school physical education teacher, wrote about self-knowledge and transformation gained from some of the reading materials:

> Many of the articles over the past two years were also informative as well as insightful. There were others that frankly were beyond my ability to comprehend. The first one that comes to mind is . . . [the excerpt from] . . . The Second Shift. I did not have to read far into this article to discover that it was all about me. I did indeed find a lot of myself in Evan and yet found him to be an unfair partner in his marriage. I give several reasons, not excuses for my less than desirable behavior. They included a reflection on how things were done when I grew up to a difference in my wife's and my personality traits. My father was the economic provider and my mother was the housewife. Contrary to their situation, my wife and I both are the equal economic providers yet the overwhelming amount of duties at home are taken on by her. My wife is a type A personality that need[s] things done right away and I am happy getting them done when the feeling hits me.
>
> Is it possible that the IET program was also a marriage counselor? Not that we

were under the same stress as Evan and his wife but the realization that there indeed was an inequitable division of duties and at times this caused some problems resulted in a shift of my own. [The faculty] would not have liked . . . [me as] . . . I once was but I think would be a lot more pleased with the [me] that I now am.

And that same teacher commenting on reading Dickens's Hard Times:

To think that the only thing that mattered was knowledge and that creativity and fun had no place in education was a sure time bomb in the book. Even though the bomb was obvious in Hard Times, I didn't hear the clock ticking in my pedagogy until much later in my two year growing process. I write in my paper that I had, to some degree, become bound by results and meeting national norms when testing students [on the Presidential Physical Fitness Standards] and my class for many was no longer fun. I did not provide room for much student creativity and believed that my way was the best way. My students' journal pleas and a few visits to my daughter's elementary class finally dislodged me from my misguided efforts. The amazing thing is that fun and excitement are two of the reasons I became a physical education teacher in the first place.

Reflective practice, critical dialogue and analysis, and provocative readings combined to push teachers to examine their own lives and to assess relations with colleagues, with children in their classrooms, and with family members. These are processes available to anyone who decides to use them. They are, like weight loss programs or exercise programs, difficult to begin and to use continuously absent structures that impose social expectations and provide reinforcements.

IV. Increased technology proficiency

Although many teachers referred to frustrations and challenges of learning to use new technologies, they overwhelmingly felt that their experiences ultimately brought them benefit. If there is any area where the program faculty have struggled, it is in learning and incorporating

technology in our own teaching. We have made a rhetorical commitment both to the teachers in the program and to our university to offer state-of-the-art technology training to teachers. State-of-the-art is a moving target in this context. At the beginning of this class's program experience (Summer, 1995), the World Wide Web was barely invented and by the time of graduation, it was a dominant force in higher education. Program faculty teaching this group of teachers were themselves well behind state-of-the-art in technology skills. Teachers in the program were often at the same level of (in-)competence:

> Since technology is not my strongest area, my heart pounded when Hugh Sockett suggested we were to join a "web forum" using our computers. Since it took courage (and help from my husband) to accomplish joining the web, I naturally became interested in the folder entitled Courage. There was a huge number of entries in the Courage folder. Many of us obviously feel that it takes courage just to step inside a classroom these days. . . . The web forum exercise also broadened my computer skills. By the time I had made five entries into the forum, I was feeling much more confident about using the computer to communicate.

Few of the teachers were confident about their computer skills at the beginning of the program. Not many were as computer phobic as this elementary teacher:

> A third and probably most incredible area of growth for me during the program has been in the area of technology. When [my teammates] approached me about the project initially, we were to focus on a problem we saw in our school. They wanted to do something with technology. [Teammate] still says my overwhelming negative reaction even took them by surprise! I was so generally easygoing, they had never seen me so vehemently *against* anything. However, my growth in my ability to use technology has been the source of extreme frustration and accomplishment for me.
>
> I was barely computer literate when I started IET. We owned a very old very slow IBM whose only software was Bank Street Writer for word processing. It wasn't

long before I was chafing at the bit to try my Mac Powerbook and Clarisworks! After some rocky times trying to print out my first papers using school printers, I talked my husband into purchasing a new printer. I couldn't rely on my computer science major son to help me, and learned to problem solve on my own. I stumbled through incompatible printers, changing the format of my thesis from Clarisworks on the Macintosh to Microsoft Word on the Pentium (so that all our research projects would be print compatible). There have been rocky times (such as losing my thesis after I had transferred it from Mac to my husband's Pentium), but I proved my son wrong. He suggested just getting another Macintosh because it would be too hard for Mom to re-learn the intricacies of Windows and Microsoft Word. I signed up for and took both of these through the count as well as Powerpoint! The color graphs that appear in my thesis were done by **me.** They may be simple by other standards, but I did them! The color transparencies which I used in my presentation--I did them!

I had less success and great frustration using e-mail and getting into the Web Conference. I have to give [teammate] full credit for sucking me into doing e-mail. [She] communicated daily with me, sending me hysterically funny missives under varied pseudonyms. What she did for me was to keep me interested and increase my comfort level by the sheer number of incoming messages that demanded "creative" responses. The Web Conference, however, was almost my undoing. It was difficult to get in using the Macintosh. My "getting in" was further complicated by my password being frozen over an unpaid library fine on a book I took out for a colleague. By the time I cut through the red tape, confronted my co-worker about paying the fine (she said she had returned the book), and finally straightened out with the library exactly how much was owed, I had wasted an incredible amount of time. [Teammate] helped me out by allowing me to use her account until my account was reactivated. By then, I was more than willing to cut the cord, return my Powerbook, and if I ever see http://coyote . . . again, it will be too soon.

The limited faculty knowledge of computer technology clearly had a negative effect on the technology learning of the master's candidates. Most of them were using the out-of-date

Macintosh Powerbooks. Faculty tended to use IBM compatibles and had little knowledge of the Macintosh technology. Further, until recently the Web servers at George Mason University were actively hostile to Macintosh computers. The experience of this class both pushed the faculty to seek funding for a technology coordinator for the program and to commit ourselves to incorporating the use of technology into all our courses. This of course meant that we had to commit ourselves to learn to use the technology with greater facility.

V. Improved understanding of writing process and improved writing style

Many of the teachers expressed fear of writing in doing the work of the program. They often said they had never felt their own writing was articulate and persuasive. Consequently they felt the experience of writing and the feedback they got was a very important part of the program. This is ironic because one would assume that most K-12 teachers have to teach and react to student writing. And, one might assume that teaching and reacting to writing would require that the teacher be a fluent writer. This assumption contains the same fallacy that the notion that great sports coaches must have been great players. You don't have to be able to do it in order to teach it!

A third grade teacher shared this experience:

> I had a hard time "writing" the papers that we had to do throughout the year. I'm not very good with grammatical errors. I'm a third grade teacher, I don't get much practice at higher level writing techniques! I tried hard to do a more professional job in my final report. It was frustrating for me, but I think that I did a fair job.

For many teachers, the structured writing experiences were more positive in the long run. As one kindergarten teacher wrote:

> As the first summer came to a close, I came to the dreaded conclusion that I was destined to have to WRITE, frequently, in order to complete this program. Writing had

never been a strength for me and the thought of having to continually put my fingers to the keyboard and expound on various subjects was an area of anxiety for me. Of course, having three teammates that loved to babble when they wrote was not comforting for me. I quickly earned the title of "being tight" as I expressed myself in my writings. Trying to overcome this tendency has been a struggle during my two years in this program. Despite this viewpoint about writing, I have become enlightened as to the power of writing and the need to be able to express myself. Even in my own kindergarten classroom I observed myself asking the children to write more about their feelings than I had in previous years. I discovered they had the ability to do this convincingly well for their age.

A middle school science teacher had an even more positive outcome:

The papers I wrote for this program and the comments I received on my papers from my professors have been very beneficial to me. I believe that my writing has gotten better and more focused with each paper. When I first thought of doing authentic assessment, I wrote in one of my papers that the reason why I wanted to do research on authentic assessment was to show others the importance of this style in a classroom. I continued to write about authentic assessment in the paper but in an unclear, unfocused manner. Diane Wood, my evaluator for this paper, gave me a lot of insight on the direction I wanted to take.

For example, I first realized I needed to show the importance of authentic assessment in my Science classes, then I could think about showing others the importance of it. Also, Ms. Wood suggested researching authors who were leading thinkers in the field of authentic assessment, such as Grant Wiggins and Dennis Palmer Wolfe. Without Diane's help, I would not have gotten this project off the ground . . . I included in my portfolio my papers that showed my improvement and success as I changed my classroom to incorporate authentic assessment. Through these papers I can see how I grew with my research project.

Teachers, like the rest of us, have anxieties about writing. Yet they have to write all kinds of informal notes in the course of their work. Participation in a program that structures the necessity of formal writing and structures systematic feedback and critical dialogue around the writing will inevitably develop their writing abilities and fluency. We found that teachers were at first reluctant to engage in critical dialogue with colleagues. Many teams developed the skills of dialogue to a high degree and others were less successful. One clear lesson that the faculty have drawn from what teachers wrote about the experiences of writing is that we needed to incorporate some systematic teaching about writing. As this teaching team began the cycle with a new class in the 1997 summer session, we incorporated a writing workshop taught by an instructor involved in the GMU Writing Program as well as a workshop on critical dialogue organized by two high school English teachers, one a program graduate and the other a current participant. Our informal impression is that the new class is well ahead of the previous class in working on writing through team dialogue.

VI. Improved teaching practices and changed educational philosophy

The *sine quo non* of any program of professional development for teachers that is audacious enough to include "transformation' in its title is that it affect the classroom practices of teachers. We have include evidence from teachers' essays throughout this paper that addresses this issue. Here we discuss a few additional examples:

> . . . It had been a long time since I had been a student and I wasn't sure that at the age of fifty I could handle the academic rigors of a master's program. However, I jumped in with both feet and was surprised at how much I enjoyed catching up on the latest educational theories and engaging in open dialogue with other teachers. I looked forward to the lectures and loved the reflective writing that was such an integral part of the program. I was hooked by Diane and Wendy's use of personal narratives as sources for individual research questions. It was exciting to discover that my brain still worked after all these years!

> The second graders in my class were terribly amused by the fact that I had "homework" to do or had to take a day off to "go to school." I often talked with them about the importance of remaining open to new ideas and alternate views on things. I shared with them the advantages of working with a team. I told them how we read each other's papers and made suggestions for improving them. I hope I impressed on them the value of listening to and respecting the opinions of others.

She goes on to tie her own learning to experience in her classroom:

> I have always considered myself a dedicated and responsible member of the teaching profession, but over the past two years I believe I have moved toward being much more than that. I am learning to be a more humble teacher by becoming a learner in my own classroom. By reflecting honestly on my classroom practice, I have increased my effectiveness and renewed my enthusiasm. I can admit to having made mistakes and am willing to take the steps necessary to correct them. I want to keep moving forward and avoid getting stuck in the burnout rut into which some of my colleagues have unfortunately fallen.

Here a first grade teacher writes about how the program's focus on moral responsibilities toward others worked its way into her classroom:

> I began the year of 1996 with the ideas of Noddings units of care, and Sockett's moral language as "curriculum." I set off to structure my classroom around "centers of care." In my mind I had a vision of creating a community of learners in a non-competitive environment. I wanted my extension classroom [to] be a place where children could learn, support each other, and feel comfortable expressing themselves. How I planned to do this, I had no idea.
>
> I began by reading a series of books entitled, "Values to Live By," by Jane Moncure. Since literature and read aloud were also a passion of mine, I thought this may

be an excellent way to begin. It provided discussion openers for the students to tell their lived experiences and thoughts on the issues raised in the books. I was careful not to call the ideas "values." I called them actions. We discussed the actions by the characters in the books, what motivated their actions, and what resulted from their actions. This enabled the children to relate and tell stories from their own lives. I found children in the first grade to be very morally verbal. They had a strong sense of right and wrong. However, I found that they did not always transfer that knowledge into actual situations. For example, many said it was wrong to push, hit, or lie, but when faced with a situation where it was to their advantage to do so, they did.

They also did not know how to deal with a situation in which they needed to confront another child who was bothering them. They didn't have the words or the courage to do so. This led me to realize that what they really needed was practice in doing this. Thus I incorporate role playing into my centers of care. My research basically entailed centering my extension classes around units of care and moral language. I attempted to give the children verbal skills needed to face daily life and also tried to have them think morally about their actions.

Teachers told us that their classroom practice was affected in a variety of ways by their experience in the program. In some cases, curriculum ideas they picked up from the reading were applied directly, for example the writing workshop ideas from Atwell's *In the Middle*. Other teachers wrote about the power of narrative writing they did in the program and how they used the same kinds of writing in their classrooms with the same powerful effects. A number of teachers, like the one quoted above, talked about the power of Sockett's moral language in enabling them to reconceptualize their classroom practice. They described what happened when they used this language with their own students. Other teachers point to still other important elements of the experience. Our overwhelming impression from teachers' narratives is that the program's effects were holistic. Writing narratives reinforced reflective practice which enabled detailed classroom observations of children which prompted additional reading in the literature on pedagogy which reinforced reflective practice which produced more power narratives. In other

words the elements of the program fed on, built on, reinforced, amplified, and interacted with other elements of the program.

VII. Improved professional and personal relationships

Teachers described changes in their relations with colleagues and friends that grew out of program experiences. One teacher complained about the demands first grade teachers made on her pedagogy. They expected each child to have a uniform set of knowledge and skills. She wrote:

> . . . I noticed that I often blamed the First grade teachers for my frustrations with my Kindergarten program. As I stated before, I realized that much of the trouble I had was actually a result of my lack of believing in myself which led to teaching in a style that was not true to my own philosophy of how children learn best. While I researched how my students developed naturally as readers and writers through self-directed activities, I gained the confidence I needed by seeing first hand all that my students could do. Once I assessed my students using unconventional methods, I found that they knew a great deal more than I was giving them credit for.
>
> As part of the data I needed for my research, I interviewed the First grade teachers. I was interested in finding out more about where my students were going when they left my classroom and how my former students were doing in their [new] classrooms. I found this dialogue so enlightening. Although they were concerned about some students in September, I was relieved to find out that most of my students were doing just fine once they were given time to blossom. I talked with them about my program and asked them about theirs. At this point I decided that in the future I would maintain this dialogue and become more of a team with the First grade. I think that all of us can teach the students better if we understand where they came from and where they are going.

Many teachers pointed to the transformational character of working closely over a two

year period with a group of teachers from their school. Teaching is often an isolating experience. They often avoid sharing classroom experiences because they can never be sure whether others are sympathetic. Many teachers wrote of having taught in the same building with teammates for 20 to 30 years without developing more than superficial knowledge of them. Sharing narratives about educational experiences and journals brought teachers together in contexts which are much more intimate than they were accustomed to. One teacher, an elementary librarian wrote about teaming in the following way:

> Working with my school team was an absolute joy! I have renewed respect for their dedication to the teaching profession and for their commitment to the nurturing of the total child. We have known each other for many years and as the library media specialist, I had worked individually with all three of my teammates on activities for their classrooms. However, we had never worked together as closely as we have these two years on any professional endeavor. I think our prior experience with teaming within the school helped get our . . .team off to a great start. We already knew the ground rules for success! We respected each other personally and professionally. At times, when the workload or personal problems were overwhelming, it would have been easy to quit a more traditional program. Our strong commitment to our team effort held us together.

Other teams had a less positive experience. In fact, as the two years were drawing to a close, a number of problems surfaced that had earlier been swept under the rug. One team that almost came unglued at the last moment, had a member who was studying the team. The faculty learned much about teaming from this teacher's research. We also have had the benefit of a faculty dissertation which studied the teaming experience of an earlier IET master's class (Gerow, 1996). One teacher described the teaming experience in these words:

> Collaboration plays an important role in my classroom as I wrote in the GMU Web Forum on autonomy. Cooperative learning helps children to learn the benefit of teamwork and accomplishing a common goal. Although I continue to look to new ways

to enhance and improve cooperative learning, I often question myself about how beneficial it really is? Hurt feelings, arguments, and noise are commonplace with learning in elementary classrooms. It is very tempting to say work by yourself today. My own teaming process, however, convinces me of the importance and benefits of teamwork.

. . . I thought working as a team would be easy and enjoyable. Little did I realize, the range of emotions I would feel toward my teammates and myself; hurt because I thought no one was taking me seriously, mad because some people were resistant to change, and embarrassed because I had hurt someone with unkind words.

Our team is made up of different personalities. As I entered the program I was aware of other personalities, giving little consideration to my own. Sitting back and following had been a role I felt comfortable with in group settings. But as I gained self confidence in using my voice, I began to see hidden parts of my personality emerge--parts I didn't want other people to see: moodiness, anger, self pity, etc.

Another teacher shared a different kind of problem:

I got the opportunity to work with a fantastic group of teachers. We shared tears, laughs, and really learned a great deal together. I was able to share with them my perspective on education from an African American woman's point of view. At our school there is a large minority population, yet I am the only minority that is an actual teacher. I was also able to give my team ideas about their research and activities to try in their classrooms, and they did the same for me.

Working with a team instead of working alone was tough but also wonderful. I think the aspect of teaming that I found most difficult was receiving and giving constructive criticism. I am not a particularly shy person but I find that many times I keep my opinions to myself in order to spare my feelings if someone disagrees with me. Teaming cured me of that. I became more open and honest in professional settings about my opinions. I found myself speaking up more in faculty meetings, and defending my views against opposing views in a variety of situations.

Our experience with mediating team conflicts and with reading the narratives from which these quotes are taken convinced us that we needed to spend much more time than we had done with the Class of 1997 on team development. We added pedagogy on developing community, developing trust, dividing the labor on teams, helping teams develop moral norms on how to handle team conflict, and giving critical feedback on writing. We have also asked for team reflections focused on how the team is functioning from each team at several points in the program. All these strategies have helped current teams function more smoothly.

VIII. Broader mentoring and modeling for others

A final category of transformation that some teachers wrote about is the ability to see oneself in broader roles of mentoring or serving broader educational aims and standards. An elementary teacher wrote:

> During the summer of 1996, our [education association] president resigned her position. This meant I had to serve as interim president until an election could be held in the fall. After much self-reflection and discussion with the [association Board] and my teammates, I agreed to run for president. I knew this placed a tremendous burden on me both personally and professionally. The 1996-1997 school year was going to be a real challenge!
>
> Before entering this master's program, I would never have had the courage to meet this challenge. Through this program, I have learned that my role as an educator does not end in the classroom. It is important for me to use my expertise to benefit the members of our association. In addition, I have learned that I have a voice and what I say and do is meaningful to others.

Another elementary teacher reflecting on personal growth discusses how her own development has strengthened her capacity to advocate for others:

. . . This program helped me see this relationship between my childhood experiences and the way I am as a grown woman. Most importantly IET helped me gain the courage to change this about myself which in turn made me a better mother.

One incident that I believe illuminates this transformation is one that involved my oldest son. We moved at the beginning of this school year and my son began attending a new school. Before he started the second grade he was a happy child who was proud that he could now "really read." After the first week of school I noticed that he seemed to be sad a lot. He was referring to himself as stupid and was not confident in his abilities. I dismissed this as an adjustment period he was going through because of his new school situation. During the third week of school I attended "Back to School" night at his school where I had the distinct and unforgettable experience of meeting his teacher. She was the most negative person about her students that I have ever met. She spent one hour telling parents about what their children should be doing but weren't and what their children were doing but shouldn't. I took notes and I could not find one positive statement that she made. At the end of the evening she asked parents to do a "homework" assignment and send in a letter about why their son or daughter is special. Then she qualified it saying "Now please don't do what one mother did last year. This mother wrote four typed pages, practically a dissertation about her child. Not only do I not have time to read letters that long but no child is that special." I could not believe my ears. I knew in my heart right then and there why my son was acting the way he was and when I look back on it I should have gone to school and demanded he be moved to another class. However, I gave it a lot of thought and I decided along with my husband that perhaps I was rushing to judgment. I knew how badly it made me feel as a teacher when parents do that to me and I did not want to do that to her. So, we left our son in her class and repeatedly tried to justify her actions and words. Until one night we were reading with him and he began to cry hysterically. We asked him what was wrong and he said "I can't read and even Ms. x says so." Of course we asked him what she said and he expressed many horrible tales about her making fun of him and ostracizing him. He told

us that when it is time to read he always goes to the bathroom and waits until he knows his turn has passed. As a mother I felt like a complete failure at this moment. My inability to openly express myself had hurt my son. I realized that I needed to be an advocate for him or no one else would be. I went to school the very next day and met with the Principal. He was very hesitant to move him and asked that I wait until he had time to speak with Ms. x. I went home and wrote a letter further explaining why this placement was not good for our son. I used the "language" I had learned being in this program and I wrote effectively about the mismatch of styles between our son and this teacher. The letter clearly let this principal know that I was an educated professional that knew what I was talking about. I was not a parent that had a vendetta and a score to settle. The letter clearly stated my refusal to give up until my son was in another classroom. I wanted what was educationally and emotionally best for my son and I would not accept any less. This Master's Program gave me the knowledge, confidence and courage to be an advocate for my son. I cannot thank everyone enough for giving me the tools to be a better mother.

This teacher was empowered to be an advocate for her child in ways she would have hesitated to act before her involvement in the program. On the other hand, she recognized (in a conversation with us after she had completed the program) that there was another element to empowerment that she had not developed. She felt that as a moral professional, she should have approached the teacher and shared her perspective on the teacher's classroom practice. She felt moral outrage that a teacher would say to parents, "Not only do I not have time to read letters that long but no child is that special." Her own view is that every child is that special. The issue is not that her child's teacher should be compelled to read four pages per child--placing a limit on the typed response was perfectly reasonable. Rather the issue is that no teacher should feel or express to parents no child is special enough to warrant four pages of description. The essence of moral professionalism is that the teacher is concerned for the moral betterment of every child.

Conclusion

We will divide our conclusions into two parts: consideration of what we have learned about transformation processes generally and, second, what we have learned about our own pedagogy. Regarding the first, we have learned for ourselves and for the teachers enrolled in the program, that it is possible to structure learning opportunities for teachers that transform their personal and professional lives and their classroom practice. It is important to note that different teachers pointed to different parts of the program as transformational. For many of the middle aged and older women, reading feminist theory for the first time was often transformative. For teachers mired in the bog of "tried and true" methods, it was confrontation with a dizzying variety of other pedagogies. For younger teachers it was often the reinforcement of the idea that teachers are experts who need strong professional voices. Other teachers found it to be particularly confirming to develop strong ties with team members. High school teachers were liberated by conversations with elementary and middle school teachers about using "hands-on" pedagogies or about giving their students voice in the classroom. We are unaware of any other program of professional development which has the substantial evidence for the transformational impact on professional practice this program has accumulated.

We do not believe that this program incorporates the only possible configuration of transformative elements or that its configuration is in any sense "best practice." Programs built on reflective practice, conceptions of moral professionalism, and teacher research could look very different from our program. It is difficult to imagine that other highly transformative programs would not include these powerful elements, however. Many programs exist that employ one or another of these elements. We are not aware of other programs that combine them to produce the kind of synergism we believe we have demonstrated in our analysis of these essays.

Regarding our own pedagogy, we have learned a great deal from teachers in the program through their constructive feedback. They were also encouraged to reflect on negative aspects of the program, another aspect of our program that supports teachers' voices and models an emphasis on continuous improvement. One source of concern was the use of technology and technology training in the program. The potential for incorporating uses of technology has

increased enormously. We have substantially increased our capacity to incorporate technology--particularly Web-based conferencing--into the curriculum. We have established technology training as a priority in our hiring of faculty.

In the course work for the Class of 1997, Hugh Sockett incorporated an assignment for his course on The Language of Moral Professionalism that required teachers to post five entries in one of six folders he created on Web Forums (a Web-based Discussion program). Each folder had a writing prompt relating to course topics. Teachers were at first reluctant to make entries that would be public to the rest of the class. Many felt shy about making any kind of public statements. Others were reticent about taking stands on controversial topics. Others were overwhelmed by the technology--using a Web browser to read others' entries and post reactions or one's own brief narratives. Most of these essays mention some aspect of the difficulty and stress of this assignment. On the other hand, almost to a person the teachers reported how powerful this experience was in its effects on their development. Almost all of them argued that we should continue to use the assignment and should introduce it earlier in the program. We have taken these suggestions so seriously as we have started new groups of teachers through the program that we view a Web-based discussion forum to be an essential part of every course.

Most teachers have responded positively to the focus in the program on teaming. Some teams have functioned more effectively than others. The particular class from which these data were drawn had very little formal coaching on developing strong teams. Subsequent classes have had much more instruction and mentoring on the development of teams. A member of the faculty has done a study of teaming processes for her dissertation and the program has benefitted substantially from this study (Gerow, 1997).

In the spirit of continuous growth, a principle in our statement of beliefs and practices referred to at the beginning of the paper, we have reflected on and queried teachers about the strengths and weaknesses of our pedagogy. At the end of every class day we ask teachers to write a page long reflection on what went well, what went poorly, and what we needed to change or enhance. Teachers have been very cooperative in telling us about aspects of the program that need improvement. They have been equally willing to tell us what has been effective in aiding their learning. We are able to resist the very reasonable conclusion that we are moving toward

perfection because no matter how well a day's learning experience has gone, it inevitably does not mesh with everyone's preferred learning style. This phenomena provides a dynamism in our program that we treasure.

TABLE 1

REPORTED PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS TO WHICH CHANGE IS ATTRIBUTED

Evidence of transformation	**Attributions**
I. New lenses/perspectives, greater understanding	study and discussion of perspectives, cohort discussions, narratives, web forum, reflection
A. Parents	
less judgmental less blame more empathy	(research)
B. Children	
more understanding, caring	(teaming, readings - Mosle, Writing Down secrets)
C. Feminist	
D. Cultural	
E. Administrative	
less frustrated with school environment	
F. Moral	
G. Autobiographical	
II. New-found professional voice, judgement & power	whole program, web forum, teaming reflection, readings (Angelou), skits
A. Express views more openly	
B. Greater confidence & courage	(critical dialogue, solving problems in team)
C. Increased involvement	
Staff dev. committee	
Served as interim president Educ. Assn	(writing proficiency due to reading & writing assignments)
D. Decisions	
loop w/kids	

E. Research proficiency	(research experience)
F. Change department's curriculum	(research)
G. Affect policy changes	
III. Greater knowledge of/sense of self	reflection, immersion in reading, personal narratives, knowledge gained in program, journaling, work in teams, web Forum
A. Purpose as teacher & individual reexamine teaching practice	(readings - Writing down secrets,
B. Work through personal problems	
C. Face imperfections	
IV. Technology proficiency	Exposure & practice with computers, web forum, teamwork, tutoring sess., E-mail, journaling, writing assigns.
A. Interest in furthering skills	
B. Use in classroom - Internet	
C. Mentor colleagues	
V. Improved writing style/process	Learning about writing process, team editing & critical dialogue, personal narratives
VI. Improved teaching practice & changed personal educational phil.	learning about self, research, web forum, readings (Hugh's book). reflection, debate, cohort discussions
A. Teaching/helping kids to:	
1. consider moral issues	(Moral Prof. Course, web forum, research)
2. be open to new ideas & different views	
3. work with teams	
4. connect material to own lives	
B. Becoming a moral professional more caring, more trusting, willing to take more risks (courage)	(whole program, Moral Prof. course, research)

C. Stronger relationships w/kids (research)
more attuned, aware of
learning styles

D. Gives students choices (research)

E. Interest in theory & research (research, knowledge of learning more questions
theories, readings -
Dewey, Gardner,
Gibbs - Tribes)

F. Reflective practice

G. Model lifelong learning

H. Listen to others

I. Community building

J. Learner in the classroom
admit mistakes

K. Increased effectiveness (reflection)

L. Renewed enthusiasm, determination (work with team)
1. refreshed, revitalized
2. resolve to teach many
more years

M. Increased interaction w/parents (research)
more aware of own behavior (research)

N. Measure success by kid's learning

O. Improve children's learning (research, reflection, teamwork)

P. Continuous improvement (teamwork)
Teaching is an ever-evolving process

Q. Improved thinking & organizational
Skills

VII. Improved professional relationships Team (cohesiveness) & critical. dial.

A. Appreciation/understanding
of other teachers' investment

B. Strengthen ties with colleagues

C. Mentor other teachers (mentors/advisors in program, research)
change in other teachers'
behavior (calls to parents)

D. Inspire younger colleagues

E. Willingness to seek help

VIII. Role model for others
for daughter

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